

## **COVID-19 Audio meeting with Forums and Members Monday, 6 April 2020**

### **Participants (between 31 and 33 persons):**

Silaban Keppler (CDRM&CDS Indonesia), Anne Fitzpatrick ([Australian Lutheran World Service](#) Nepal and Cambodia), Anne Masterson (NCA Pakistan), Bhoj Khanal (LWF Nepal), Canisius Sovis (NCA Afghanistan), Andi Juanda (CWS Indonesia), Edward Santos (NCCP Philippines), Henry Braun (FCA Myanmar), Hindra Sulaksono (UnitingWorld, Indonesia), Irawaty Manullang (PELKESI Indonesia), Joseph Sahayam (CASA India), Kristen Rasmussen (DCA Cambodia), Anastasia Maylinda (YEU Indonesia), Marcel Agung (PELKESI Indonesia), Marvin Parvez (CWSA Pakistan), Michael Koeniger (CWS Indonesia), Nelson Sinaga (CDRM&CDS Indonesia), Oliver Maertin (BftW Berlin), Nop Polin (DCA Cambodia), Saara Lehmuskoski (FCA Cambodia), Sari Mutia Timur (YEU Indonesia), Shakeb Nabi (ICCO Corp. Bangladesh), Silvia Rovelli (ICCO Bangladesh), Sivouthan Norng (HEKS-EPER Cambodia), Sofia Olsson (FCA Nepal), Sopheap Suon (Life with Dignity, Cambodia), Sylwyn Sheen Alba (NCCP Philippines), Verdina Puspita (PELKESI Indonesia), Yukiko Maki (CWS Japan).

**ACT Alliance:** Femia Baldeo (Interim Regional Representative Asia Pacific), Cyra Bullecer (Humanitarian Officer – Asia Pacific), Stefanie Meier (Communications and Resource Development Officer Asia Pacific).

ACT Alliance will reach out to those who could not participate today.

### **Talking Points:**

- What is the forum/are the members working on re COVID-19
- Plans for the response
- Support needed from ACT, to be shared with Geneva
- Questions related to the ACT Alliance Global Response

### **Situation in the forums per country**

#### **Indonesia (Irawaty, PELKESI, Hindra, UnitingWorld, and Linda, YAKKUM)**

##### **Focus of activities**

- YEU: Health
- CDRM/CDS: WASH
- CWS: Livelihood, psycho-social support, WASH and food security
- UnitingWorld: Health, livelihood, support of church members

**Appeal:** Some members are already preparing for the joint appeal for the Indonesia national forum with different focus; health (for hospitals and community), engagement with church leaders, religious leaders, CTP, livelihood. Members who joined in this discussion: National (Pelkesi, YEU, CDRM & CDS), Intl (CWS, Uniting World). Other members who could not join: ICCO, Salvation Army, LWR, Mission21).

**Support needed:** -

## **Myanmar (Henry, FCA)**

The forum members have 2 focus areas:

- Livelihood, Impact of COVID on people and programs, strengthening resilience in times of travel restrictions.
- Migrants returning, mainly from Thailand (approx. 3-4 million people in Thailand, most of them having to return). People fear that they will bring in COVID into the country.

**Appeal:** Only small members consider applying, forum members in general are not very favorable, as there are high administrative hurdles. Also money given is normally much less than what is requested. Will be discussed. ACT appeal structure is not very interesting for us, rather looking elsewhere. The membership application of the first local organization which would like to become a member has taken a back seat as forum members are working from home.

**Support needed:** Regional office should inform Geneva that the administrative hurdles on appeal application should be reduced. Inform forums about which countries will be prioritized to save time and resources on appeal application.

## **Cambodia (Kristen, DCA)**

- No coordination on forum level by DCA yet, but on broader level. Will ask for a meeting on forum level.
- Focus DCA: WASH, health (education), food situation. Humanitarian Response forum has done quite a lot already (UNICEF, Save the Children, local partners). But slow start, still trying to get an overview by first assessment. Meeting for assessment this afternoon.
- There are approx. 50,000 migrants from Thailand with no livelihood/income which will be critical for support. The whole region around is suffering from drought.

**Appeal:** Situation has to be discussed first. Cambodia will not apply for the appeal but instead will coordinate their responses based on current programs.

**Support needed:** -

## **Nepal (Sofia, FCA)**

- Focus: Food shortage/insecurity, migrant workers. WASH, early recovery and livelihood.
- 30% of Nepal's economy depends on remittances from abroad which are expected to decrease because of COVID-19
- The borders are shut, there is a complete lock-down.

**Appeal:** At least 3 members will go for the appeal although Nepal was not in the list (Note: It was explained that the list shared was not the final list as was just a reference).

**Support needed:** Clarity about the countries which will be included.

## **Bangladesh (Shakeb, ICCO)**

COVID-19 has changed the situation for us. We as an ACT Forum don't have the capacities to react and had a lot of discussions on that. Logistics are one issue. The other one is that we are not able to go to the communities. Therefore, the forum is thinking on how to interact with communities on the digital way.

A meeting of the forum to discuss COVID-19 response will take place today.

**Appeal:** Designing a proposal. Forum members want to become active concerning the Rohingya and their host communities, but also on behalf of other vulnerable communities like daily wagers, sex workers and gender-related minorities. We want to ensure that all the members are familiar with the code of conduct.

**Support needed:** Clarity about the countries which will be included.

## **Pakistan (Anne, NCA and Marvin, CWSA)**

- There is no Pakistan forum, but NCA is coordinating with CWSA, ICCO CA in Pakistan as well as Afghanistan.
- Country situation: Quite high number of cases, partial lockdown, doing home office, internet coverage OK. High economic impact on daily wagers.
- NCA response has started in Sindh province focusing on WASH and public health as well as 2 partners in Punjab and KP although operations have stopped for 2.5 weeks now since lockdown.
- Focus: WASH and public health, awareness raising by billboards and posters, collaboration with Ministry of Health, WHO and private institutions.
- Close collaboration with civil society and religious partners/leaders, supporting communication in mosques and during prayers.
- Long-term response will focus on the economic impact of COVID-19
- Focus: Coordination is key. Awareness, CASH transfers, social cohesion, Quality and Accountability (webinar on 9 April). Working in marginalized communities, about 100 Mio. people in Pakistan and Afghanistan living in poverty and being pushed into extreme situations by COVID-19. We hope that funding partners will continue their commitments. ACT is made of members like us. It would be good for all of us to be part of the joint efforts. We should not promote bilateralism but empower our alliance.

**Appeal:** - Clarity on the Appeal

**Support needed:** Clear on appeal. Encourage donors not to move around and reallocate their grants

## **Afghanistan (Canisius, NCA)**

(Canisius is currently in Sri Lanka, cannot get back to Afghanistan)

- More or less the same as Pakistan. Partial lockdown. Number of cases are officially low but not accurate, as number of tests is low. There are not enough financial resources in the country. People come to the streets to look for work. The criminality rate is going up. The crossing of the Afghanistan-Pakistan and Iran borders are problematic without border controls and inspection. There are no flights.
- Major donors revisit their funding. NCA received donations just for COVID as well.
- The focus of NCA was on cash seeding approach and prevention measures at strategic locations and WASH mobile campaigns. Food security is another problem. Working with partners, especially religious actors.

**Appeal:** Started discussion together with Pakistan a few weeks ago.

**Support needed:** -

## **Philippines (Edward and Sylwyn, NCCP)**

- Philippines forum currently consists of NCCP and World Renew
- Number of 3000+ COVID cases is not reflective, as government reacts very slowly.
- Focus on food distribution and intervention, livelihood. As a consequence of the lockdown, there are many workers not being able to get home and displaced now. Public awareness: churches will be sensibilized to spread correct information about the virus and its consequences.
- Started distribution of food packs to urban informal settlements in Metro Manila
- NCCP has been active in coordination meetings with UN OCHA and WHO Philippines since February until present.
- NCCP is coordinating with the Faith-based network in the Philippines in communicating and mobilising member churches about COVID-19

**Appeal:** Discussion going on

**Support needed:** Since they have an outstanding Appeal, seeking guidance on how to go about the COVID-19 Appeal

## **India (Joseph, CASA)**

- The number of cases in India is still rising. The situation worsened due to unawareness of the lockdown which is complete except for essentials.
- Reverse situation: more than a million migrant workers returning to their home provinces in the North. People working in agriculture and small business also have no income. They are often walking, stuck at many places and not being accepted by the native population. They have no land. Northern provinces have no mechanisms to handle the crisis, for isolation etc.
- We still don't know what will happen after April 14, and we don't see any reaction from the government. It might take 1 year until people go back. They might not be able to access their bank accounts.

- Focus: Awareness rising, responding among migrants and daily laborers, conditional and unconditional cash transfers, psycho-social support, working with the church in Delhi.

**Appeal:** -

**Support needed:** -

## **Japan (Yukiko, CWS)**

- Japan Forum consists of 2 organizations: CWS and National Christian Council in Japan (NCCJ).
- Focus: Have been collecting information since last week. However, action was limited as government will proclaim state of emergency possibly tomorrow. The number of patients is rising exponentially. Experts warn of collapse of medical care system through the media. There will be an official statement of the ACT Japan Forum against COVID-19, based on the global appeal together with fundraising, calling for solidarity among forum member churches and FBOS

**Appeal:** -

**Support needed:** Update on responses implemented by ACT members. It will help for fundraising.

## **ACT Secretariat (Cyr)**

- There was a coordination call on Friday 3 April. So far, USD 1,5 million pledged. The appeal will start with one country per region as funding is limited however local organizations will be able to access RRF up to USD80,000. Contributions by the RRF can be discussed.
- Donors have caution about reallocation of current responses to COVID-19 as the needs in the current responses should be prioritized also.
- The call for proposal and its mechanics will be published on Wednesday. We are aware that the context is changing in each country so the list on Annex 2 in the Appeal is just indicative.
- A steering committee consisting of 5 persons will review and approve the proposals submitted

## **Answer to questions and remarks:**

- Selection criteria will be clearly defined in the call for proposal mechanics.
- One of the references for the countries being prioritized is UN's Scale Up Activation for COVID-19.
- Proposals at a later stage are possible, the appeals being on a rolling basis. Selection will be decided by the steering committee with recommendations from the HPOs.

## **Agreements/Action Points on the Support from Secretariat**

- ACT Regional office will inform all forums on which countries will be prioritized in the region
- ACT Regional office will initiate a call to look at entry points for coordination and collaboration amongst forums at the regional level
- Provide clarity on the Appeal, e.g., if there's already a decision on the countries to be prioritized early on so that they won't waste their time preparing for the Appeal proposal
- Disseminate updates on the responses by ACT members
- Encourage donors not to move around and reallocate their grants to COVID-19